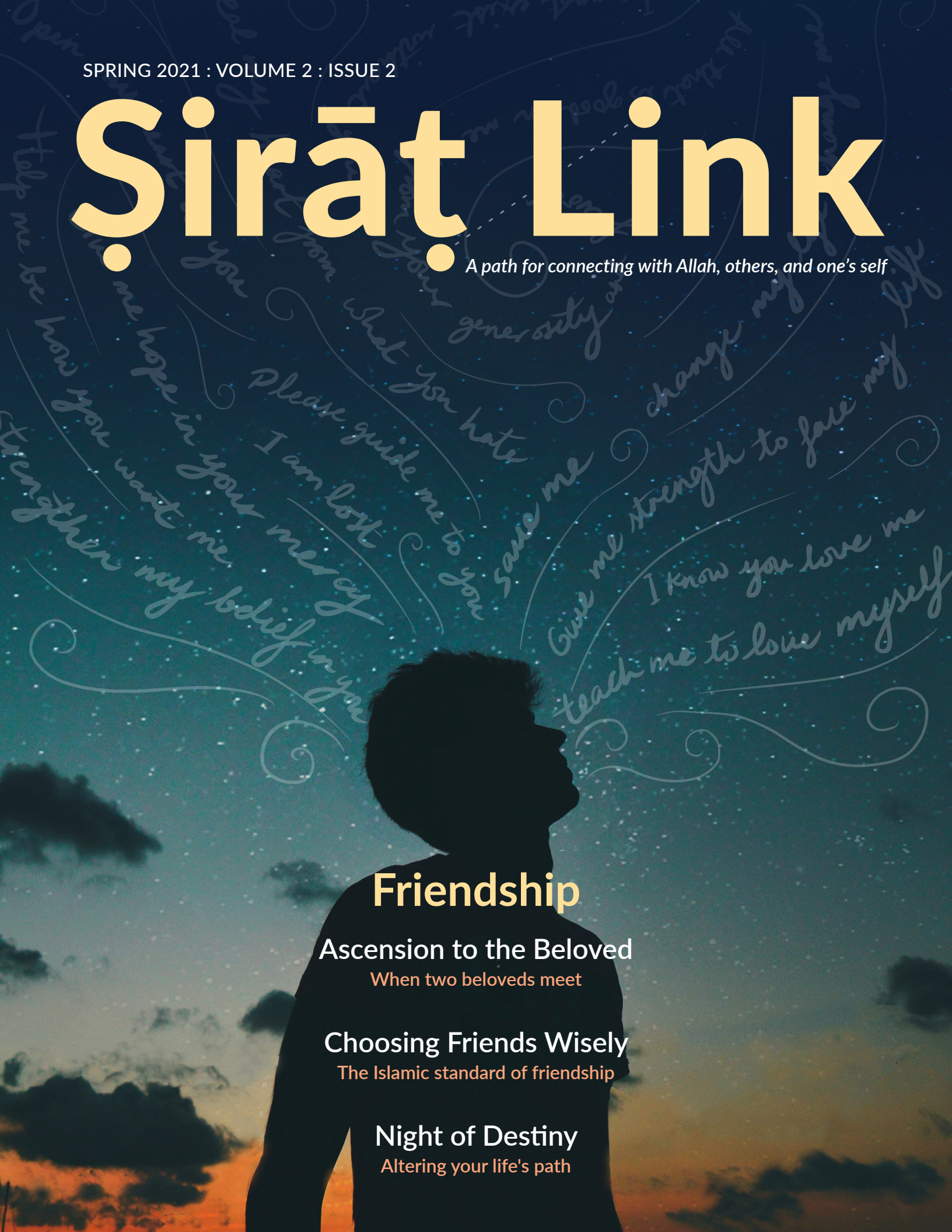
SPRING 2021 : VOLUME 2 : ISSUE 2

Ṣirāṭ Link

A path for connecting with Allah, others, and one's self


Please guide me to you
I am lost
Show me hope in your mercy
You want me
Strengthen my belief in you
What you hate
Your generosity
Give me strength to face my
I know you love me
teach me to love myself

Friendship

Ascension to the Beloved
When two beloveds meet

Choosing Friends Wisely
The Islamic standard of friendship

Night of Destiny
Altering your life's path

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Letter from

Salāmun ʿAlaykum,

May Allah bless you and your family. I extend my tabrīkāt (blessings), taḥiyyāt (glad tidings), duʿā (prayers) to all Muslims around the world on the beginning of the spiritual season, the blessed months of Rajab, Shaʿbān, and Ramaḍān.

Rajab is the month of Allah. Taking a closer look at the root of the word of Rajab, it is seen that in the old times the best means to travel was the camel. This is because when you give a camel water, it can store the water for many days. Centuries ago, the people used camels to travel through the desert and if they happened to lose their way, they could slaughter the camel and it would serve another purpose besides travel: nourishment. The lost travelers would be able to eat the meat of the camel and use the big bones of the camel to protect against predatory animals. Furthermore, the skin of the camel would be a shield from cold weather and the heat of the sun, so in essence, all the parts of the camel would become a blessing for the traveller(s). This would give them some time to survive in hopes that they would find their way by the time the camel meat was finished.

Ṣirāṭ Link

A 2nd Chance Books Publication

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

For the love of Him, they feed the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner.

(Noble Qurʾān 76:8)

2nd Chance Books is a non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, tools for rehabilitation, and a support system. By responding to their numerous questions about Islam, they gain a more thorough understanding of the religion. So far, 2nd Chance has distributed over 12,000 books to inmates across the country.

Among 2nd Chance's most recent initiatives is Ṣirāṭ Link, a quarterly magazine. The title Ṣirāṭ Link, inspired by the Arabic term Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm which means the right path, presents this magazine as a means of guidance to a greater connection to Allah, as well as offering the opportunity for connections with the broader community, and the improvement of one's self. Inshāʾ Allāh it can also serve as an opportunity for growing one's faith through education.

This magazine will be under the guidance and oversight of Moulana Nabi Raza Mir Abidi, Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Center, and several other scholars and experts.

MOULANA ABIDI

However, sometimes they did finish the meat in its entirety and would still not have found their way out of the desert. In this case, the head of a caravan would typically announce to everyone that they should go in different directions (since they were lost anyways) and small groups would split up on different paths, hoping they chose the right one. This would be a last resort and an attempt to escape the starvation and death in the desert. Each person would set off with hope into the infinite sands stretching beyond one's eyes, hoping for relief. When they had a need of water again, they would find a cactus and look for a small reservoir in the trunk where possibly a little bit of water would be in the trunk of the plant. Though, not all cacti provided water-sometimes out of 20-30 different cacti, one would have water. Everyone would search and maybe one person would find water and that lucky person would say, "waṣāltū Rajab!" meaning "I have reached hope and life!" For water symbolizes life. This is the beautiful meaning of Rajab, the beginning of a season filled with life, hope, and growth. This month is called Rajab which means the month of hope, life, blessings, and forgiveness. In fact, Rajab is called Rajab al-Murajjab which means that Allah's blessings are not raining down, they are pouring down.

Rajab is the month of Allah and forgiveness. Shaʿbān is the month of the Noble Prophet (ṣ) and adorning ourselves with good deeds and reciting the blessings and salutations upon the Noble Prophet (ṣ) and his Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa). Lastly, Ramaḍān is the month where the believers become the guests of Allah. Let us take advantage of this spiritual season filled with the special mercies of Allah. By understanding the beauty of the months, inshāʾAllāh we become better prepared to take advantage of them and grow closer to Him.

With Duʿās,

Sayyid Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR RAJAB

1st	Birth Anniversary of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa)	*February 13th, 2021
3rd	Death Anniversary of Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī an-Naqī (ʿa)	*February 15th, 2021
10th	Birth Anniversary of Imām Muḥammad at-Taqī al-Jawād (ʿa)	*February 22nd, 2021
13th	Birth Anniversary of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa)	*Februray 25th, 2021
25th	Birth Anniversary of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa)	*March 9th, 2021
26th	Aʿmāl of Night of Miʿrāj & Mabʿath	*March 10th, 2021
27th	Eid al-Mabʿath and Miʿrāj	*March 11th, 2021
28th	Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) begins journey to Karbala	*March 12th, 2021

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR SHAʿBĀN

1st	Birth Anniversary of Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa)	*March 15th 2021
3rd	Birth Anniversary of Imām Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa)	*March 17th 2021
4th	Birth Anniversary of Ḥaḍrat ʿAbbās ibn ʿAlī (ʿa)	*March 18th 2021
5th	Birth Anniversary of Imām Zayn ul-ʿĀbidīn (ʿa)	*March 19th 2021
15th	Birth Anniversary of Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj)	*March 29th 2021

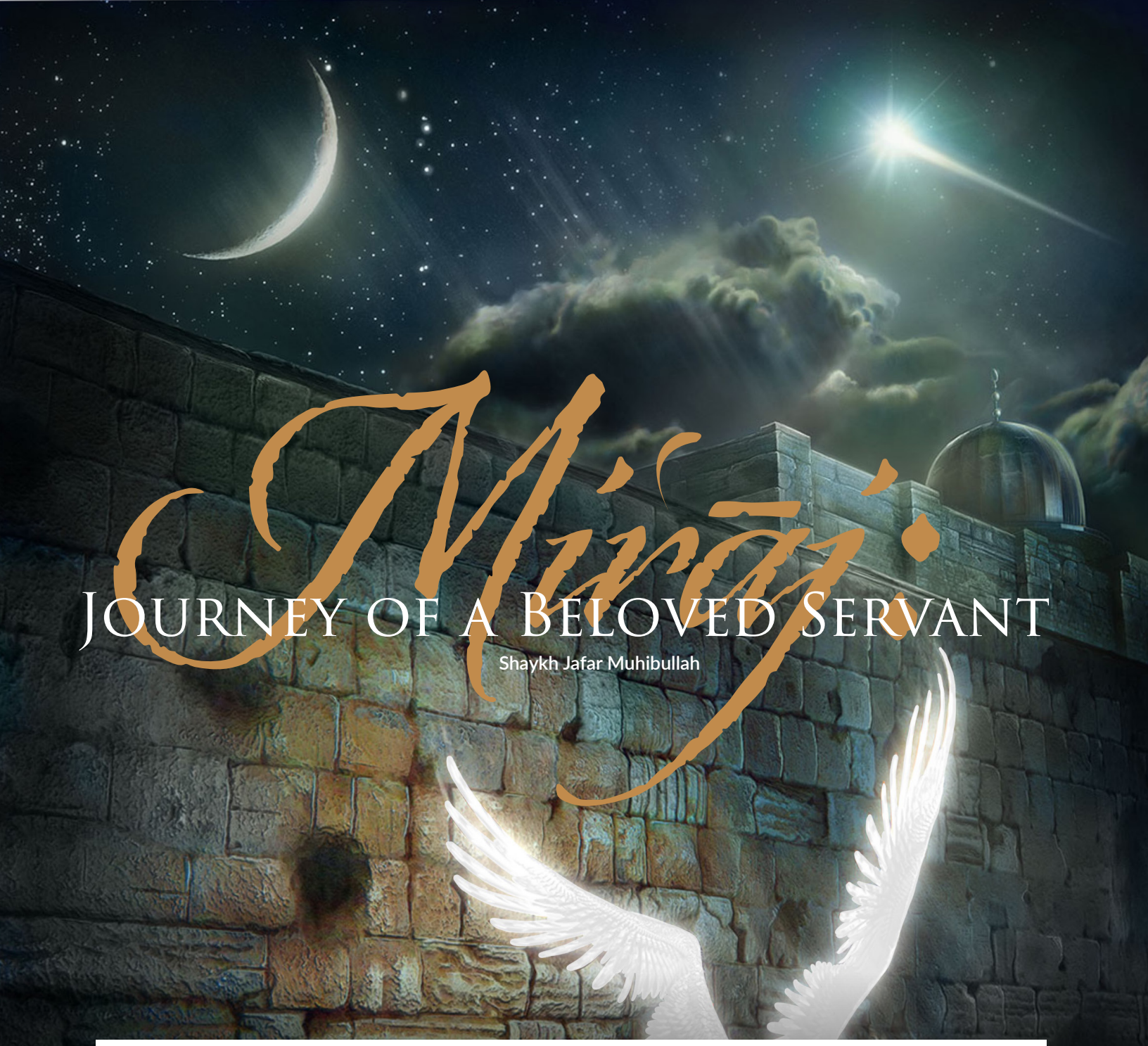
SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR RAMAḌĀN

1st	Beginning of Fasting	*April 13th 2021
10th	Death Anniversary of Ḥaḍrat Khadījah al-Kubrā (ʿa)	*April 22nd 2021
15th	Birth Anniversary of Imām Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa)	*April 27th 2021
18th	First night of 19th Laylat ul-Qadr	*April 30th 2021
20th	Night of 21st Laylat ul-Qadr	*May 2nd 2021
21st	Death Anniversary of Imām ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib (ʿa)	*May 3rd 2021
22nd	Night of 23rd Laylat ul-Qadr	*May 4th 2021

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR SHAWWĀL

1st	Eid ul-Fiṭr	*May 13th, 2021

*Please note the above Gregorian dates are only estimates. The dates are subject to change based on moon sighting, upon which the Islamic calendar is based.



Mi'rāj

Journey of a Beloved Servant

Shaykh Jafar Muhibullah

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى
الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

Immaculate is He who carried His servant on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose environs We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

Noble Qur'ān, 17:1

The 27th day of Rajab is the Biʿthat—the day when Allah delegated Muḥammad (ṣ) as His Prophet to deliver the final message to humanity. The Night Journey, or Miʿrāj, also occurred on the same date, according to scholars. On this journey, the Prophet (ṣ) ascended to the Heavens to witness Allah's signs. Scholars agree that the Miʿrāj occurred several times, but according to some narrations, it happened at least 30 times.

One of the highlights of the Prophet's (ṣ) dialogue with Allah on the Night Journey was when he inquired about gaining closeness to Allah. In one section of the Miʿrāj ḥadīth, the Prophet (ṣ) asks Allah:

O Lord! Guide me toward an action by which I will gain closeness to you. O Allah!

Before mentioning Allah's response, it is essential to understand a few points. First, Allah alludes to the Prophet's (ṣ) proximity to Him by calling him ʿabd or servant rather than by his name—Muḥammad (ṣ). The title "servant" is granted to those near Him; for such people in good standing with Allah, a night's journey to witness His signs only honors their station. It is also worthy to note that prior to revealing Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, Allah commanded the Prophet (ṣ) to say:

رَّبِّ زِدنِي عِلمًا

Rabbi zidnī ʿilmā

My Lord, increase me in knowledge. Sūrah Ṭāhā (20:114)

Allah orders the Prophet (ṣ) to ask Him for more knowledge. Therefore, the Miʿrāj is Allah's reply to this request or duʿā. The journey thus becomes the means by which Allah taught the Prophet (ṣ) from His infinite knowledge. Nothing is comparable to Allah's knowledge, not even that of Allah's Messenger (ṣ) or his noble progeny (ʿa). Nonetheless, the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) is "the city of knowledge and wisdom," and his family (ʿa), particularly Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), is "the gate" of that city. In several ḥadīth (traditions) and in Ziyārat al-Jāmiʿat al-Kabīrah, the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) are referred to as khazāʾinul-ʿilmillāh, or the treasurers of Allah's knowledge. So, their (ʿa) knowledge surpasses that of everyone except Allah. Therefore, the Miʿrāj is also when the Prophet (ṣ) gained knowledge that he later imparted to humanity.

A second point to ponder is the significance of the Prophet (ṣ) asking for a means to gain closeness to his Lord. Even before ascending to the Heavens on the Night Journey, there was no being closer to Allah than the Prophet (ṣ). So, how do we understand the meaning of closeness (qurbah) to Allah? While performing our religious duties, whether it is prayer, fasting, or ablution, we must make intentions to do them "qurbatan ilallāh." That is, we do them to gain closeness to Allah; yet, we often do so without understanding the depth of this closeness. Āyatullāh Saʾadat Parvar, in his commentary on the Miʿrāj ḥadīth, outlines two types of closeness.

The first is closeness in essence (qurbah dhātī). That is, closeness from Allah's perspective—or how He views His own closeness to creation. This vantage point is expressed in the following verses:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِى عَنِّى فَإِنِّى قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

And when My servants ask you about Me, I am near; I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. (2:186)

and

وَنَحنُ أَقرَبُ إِلَيهِ مِن حَبلِ الوَرِيدِ

We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (50:16)

The second is closeness by witnessing (qurbah shuhūdī), which is from the viewpoint of creation. For example, Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) recognized Allah's closeness to creation, and then said: Allah is in everything without being a part of it and outside of everything without being separated from it.[1] In other words, he testifies that everything exists by virtue of Allah's closeness to His creation (qurbah dhātī). Another example of qurbah shuhūdī is found in the servitude of the Prophet ʿIsā (ʿa) and the angels. Allah states:

لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّـهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

The Messiah does not despise being a servant of Allah, nor do the angels who are stationed close to Him. (4:172)

Their willingness to be servants (*ʿabd*) testifies to Allah's closeness to them. It also shows their understanding that servitude leads to nearness to Him. In fact, Allah blessed

Continued on page 10

CHOOSING FRIENDS WISELY

By Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq(ʿa) said:

1 *"A friend should not hide anything from you;*

2 *He should be the same person to you in private that he is in public;*

3 *He should consider your positive characteristics as his own;*

Indeed, people are heavily influenced by the company they keep. Friends can either influence each other to make good decisions or they can drag one another down to do unspeakable actions. How many times have we seen people who commit crimes say, their friends influenced them? Peer pressure is a serious issue that all people are faced with, especially the youth. We should make ourselves well equipped with the knowledge of Islam and the sayings of the Infallible guides from the Prophet's (ṣ) Household (ʿa). With the right information, we will know how to better choose friends based on Divine principles.

It is clear from the traditions that it is of great importance that we choose our friends wisely. This brings us to a few questions: What is the criterion for friendship? What does Islam have to say about this?

We find a beautiful enlightening tradition from the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) where he has quoted the beloved Prophet Jesus (ʿa), son of Mary, saying to his disciples:

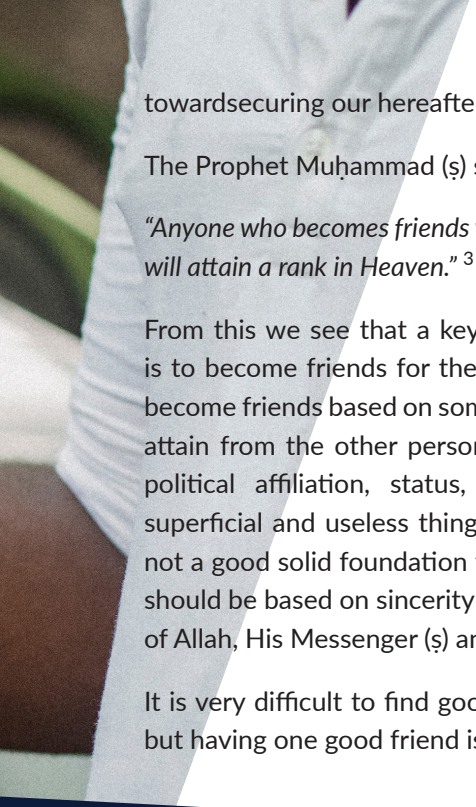
"Sit with someone (keep company with) who upon seeing him makes you remember Allah, his logic adds to your knowledge and his practice makes you inclined toward the hereafter." [1]

From this narration, we learn that when acquiring friends, we should look for the quality of having a friend who will remind us of Allah, religion, and the hereafter. This is very important, because when one has God-conscious friends they will remind each other if either one of them gets distracted by something which is against their religious belief or if one starts to drift off from the right path. We can see this in another narration of our beloved Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) where he said,

"The best friends are those who help you when you mention (a matter) and remind you when you forget." [2]

The second thing we can learn from this is that we should look for friends who like to discuss beneficial things which will increase our knowledge about religion, life, and other fields of knowledge. So, we should strive to acquire friends who like to talk about meaningful things rather than gossip or other useless topics.

The third thing that we can benefit from in this narration is that we should befriend those whose actions and good deeds inspire us to be better people and inspire us to work



towardsecuring our hereafter.

The Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) said in regards to friendship:

"Anyone who becomes friends with others for the sake of Allah, will attain a rank in Heaven." [3]

From this we see that a key quality in seeking friendship is to become friends for the right reasons. People usually become friends based on some sort of benefit that they will attain from the other person, whether it be materialistic, political affiliation, status, wealth, etc. These are all superficial and useless things that will fade away and are not a good solid foundation for true friendship. Friendship should be based on sincerity and based on the mutual love of Allah, His Messenger (ṣ) and his Household (ʿa).

It is very difficult to find good friends in this day and age, but having one good friend is much better than having many unreliable friends. Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) said:

"When the friends are counted they are large in number, but the friends who come to one's aid in dire need are very few." [4]

We see this every day. Think of how many people that you consider your friends and then take that number and think to yourself how many of these people would truly be there for you when you need it? You will come to realize that a lot of people may claim to be your friend, but there are very few that you can actually depend on in a crisis situation. Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) said

"A friend cannot be considered as a true friend unless he is tested on three occasions: in time of need; behind your back and after your death." [5]

Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa) warns us of befriending certain classes of people in the following narration:

"Do not approach or make friends with the fools, the misers, the cowards, or the liars. Fools will harm you instead of benefiting you. Misers will take things from you and not give you anything in return. Cowards will run away from you and their parents. Liars will testify but will not tell the truth."

We should do our utmost to make sure we examine our associates to make sure they do not have these negative qualities in order that we may not be harmed by their characteristics.

We have a narration from Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) which outlines the limits of friendship: *"There are certain limits to friendship. Whoever does not fall within those limits should not be considered to be a perfect friend, and whoever does not have anything that falls within those limits should not be ascribed anything related to friendship. The conditions for friendship are: A friend should not hide anything from you; He should be the same person to you in private that he is in public; He should consider your positive characteristics as his own; and your negative characteristics as his own; Wealth and position should not change him; He should not withhold from you what he has power over; and he should not abandon you during times of hardship."* [6]

4 *and your negative characteristics as his own;*

5 *Wealth and position should not change him;*

6 *He should not withhold from you what he has power over;*

7 *and He should not abandon you during times of hardship."*

What wonderful qualities to find in a person! May Allah grant us all the ability to secure good and sincere friendships for His sake. May Allah allow us to recognize the true friends that we have and be thankful for them. May Allah allow us the Divine blessing of being supporters of the 12th Imām (ʿaj). And we ask that He protects us from acquiring the evil friend that Imām Jawād (ʿa) has described

[1] *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl, P. 44.*
[2] *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl, Maxims of the Prophet, Ḥadīth #6.*
[3] *Mishkāt al-Anwār Fī Ghurar al-Akhbār, by Al-Ṭabarsī, Ḥadīth #1056.*
[4] *Lessons from Islam, by Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣuḥufī.*
[5] *100 Maxims of Imām ʿAlī, by Ansariyan Publications.*
[6] *Mishkāt al-Anwār Fī Ghurar al-Akhbār, by Al-Ṭabarsī, Ḥadīth #395.*

Traits of the

Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa)

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سَيِّدَ السَّاجِدِيْنَ
Peace be on you, O leader of those who prostrate

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا زَيْنَ الْعَابِدِيْنَ
Peace be on you, O adornment of the worshippers

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَلِيْفَ الْحَسَرَاتِ
Peace be on you, O victim of sorrow

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ذَا الثَّفَنَات
Peace be on you, O possessor of prostration marks

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَاحِبَ الْعَبَرَاتِ
Peace be on you, O he who wept and mourned

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَسِيْرَ الْكُرُبَاتِ
Peace be on you, O captive of hardships

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَعْظَمَ آلِ الْعِبَاءِ
Peace be on you, O he from the family of great worshippers

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابْنَ خَامِسِ أَصْحَابِ أَهْلِ الْكِسَاءِ
Peace be on you, O the son of the fifth of the people of the cloak

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابْنَ سَيِّدِ الشُّهَدَاءِ
Peace be on you, O son of the leader of the martyrs

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عِمَادَ الْأَتْقِيَاءِ
Peace be on you, O support of the pious ones

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
May Allah's peace, blessings, and bounties be upon you

Ḥaḍrat Abū al-Faḍl ʿAbbās (ʿa)

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَابْنَ اَمِيْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْن
Peace be upon you, the son of the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa)

أَشْهَدُ لَقَدْ نَصَحْتَ لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلأَخِيكَ
I bear witness that you served Allah, His Messenger (ṣ), and your brother sincerely

فَنِعْمَ ٱلأَخُ ٱلْمُوَاسِي
You were the most excellent self-sacrificing brother

فَنِعْمَ ٱلصَّابِرُ ٱلْمُجَاهِدُ ٱلْمُحَامِي ٱلنَّاصِرُ
You were the most excellent steadfast fighter, supporter, protector,

وَٱلأَخُ ٱلذَّافِعُ عَنْ أَخِيهِ
and brother who defended his brother,

ٱلْمُجِيبُ إِلَىٰ طَاعَةِ رَبِّهِ
responding to the obedience to his Lord,

ٱلرَّاغِبُ فِيمَا زَهِدَ فِيهِ غَيْرُهُ مِنَ ٱلثَّوَابِ ٱلْجَزِيلِ
and worked desirably for gaining the abundant reward which others refused,

وَأَلْحَقَكَ ٱللَّهُ بِدَرَجَةِ آبَائِكَ فِي جَنَّاتِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ
So, may Allah attach you to the rank of your fathers in the gardens of bliss.

Distinguished

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

يَا رَبَّ ٱلْعَالِمِينَ
O Lord of the worlds!

ٱللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ ٱلإِمَامِ ٱلشَّهِيدِ
O Allah, send blessings upon the martyred Imām,

ٱلْمَقْتُولِ ٱلْمَظْلُومِ ٱلْمَخْذُولِ
the slain, the wronged, the disappointed,

وَٱلسَّيِّدِ ٱلْقَائِدِ وَٱلْعَابِدِ ٱلزَّاهِدِ
the leading master, the worshipper, the detached (from this world),

وَٱلْوَصِيِّ ٱلْخَلِيفَةِ ٱلإِمَامِ ٱلصِّدِّيقِ
the successor, the vicegerent, the leader, the truthful,

ٱلطُّهْرِ ٱلطَّاهِرِ ٱلطَّيِّبِ ٱلْمُبَارَكِ
the pure, the immaculate, the superb, the blessed,

وَٱلرَّضِيِّ ٱلْمَرْضِيِّ وَٱلتَّقِيِّ ٱلْهَادِي ٱلْمَهْدِيِّ
the contented, the pleased, the pious, the guide, the rightly guided,

ٱلزَّاهِدِ ٱلذَّائِدِ ٱلْمُجَاهِدِ ٱلْعَالِمِ
the detached (from this world), the defender (of Islam), the striver, the knowledgeable,

إِمَامِ ٱلْهُدَىٰ سِبْطِ ٱلرَّسُولِ وَقُرَّةِ عَيْنِ ٱلْبَتُولِ
the leader of true guidance, the grandson of the Messenger (ṣ), and the delight of the eyes of the Chaste Lady (ʿa)

Imām Ḥasan (ʿa)

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَالَمِينَ
Peace be on you, O son of the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds (ṣ)

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ امِيرِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
Peace be on you, O son of the Commander of the Believers (ṣ)

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ فَاطِمَةَ ٱلزَّهْرَاءِ
Peace be on you, O son of Fāṭimah, the luminous lady (ʿa)

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نُورَ ٱللَّهِ
Peace be on you, O light of Allah

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صِرَاطَ ٱللَّهِ
Peace be on you, O path of Allah

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ ايُّهَا ٱلْقَائِمُ ٱلامِينُ
Peace be on you, O trustworthy upholder (of God's commands)

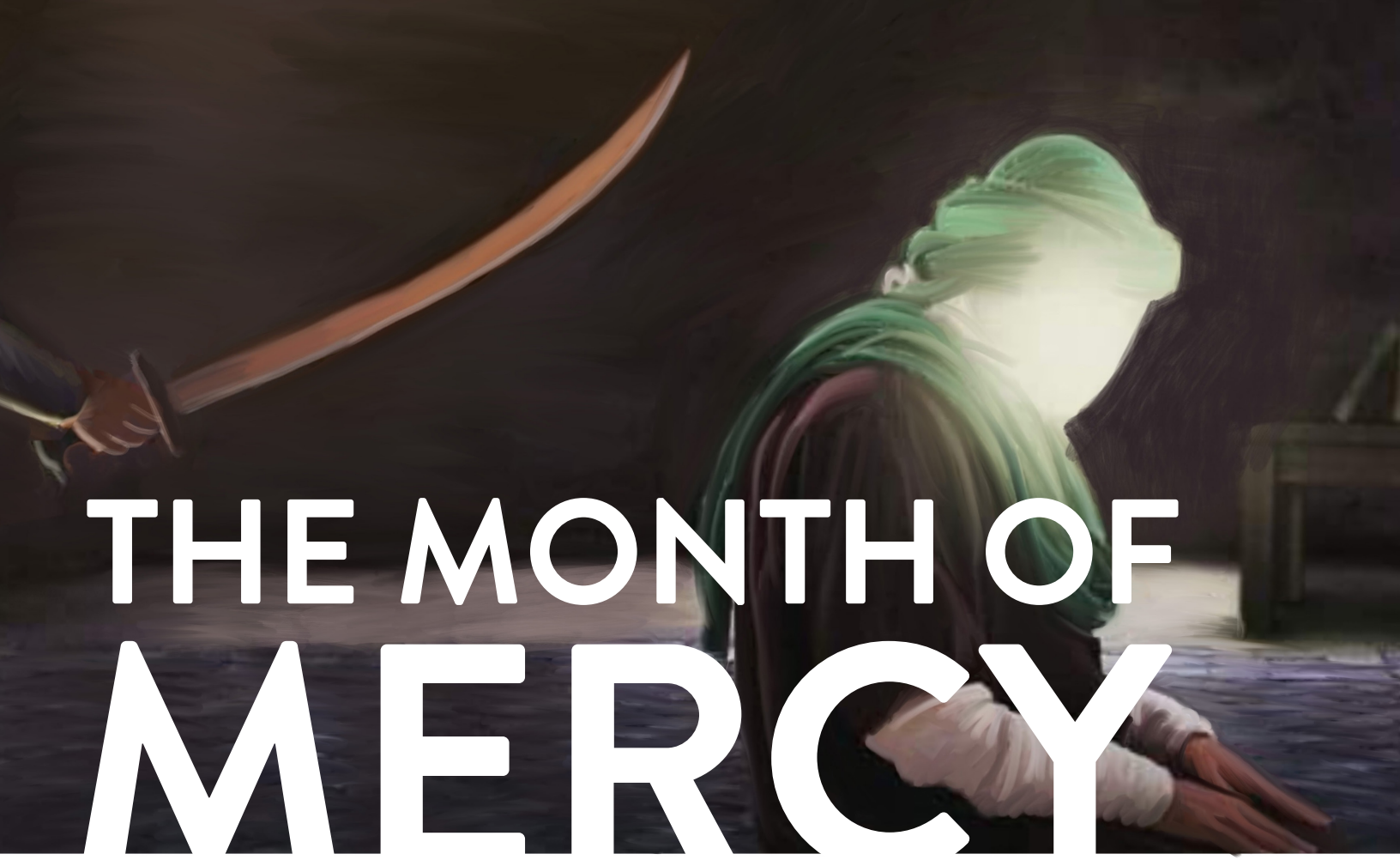
ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ ايُّهَا ٱلْعَالِمُ بِٱلتَّاوِيلِ
Peace be on you, O well-experienced in the interpretation (of the Qurʾān)

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ ايُّهَا ٱلْهَادِي ٱلْمَهْدِيُّ
Peace be on you, O guide and rightly guided

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ ايُّهَا ٱلشَّهِيدُ ٱلصِّدِّيقُ
Peace be on you, O truthful martyr

وَرَحْمَةُ ٱللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you

This page features several ziyārat (visitations) of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa). The words are recited upon visiting the members of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) and dignified individuals and usually relay their honorable characteristics and distinctions. The visitations can be recited at the grave of the individual or from one's home.



THE MONTH OF MERCY

The following is a compilation of excerpts of Prophet Muḥammad's (ṣ) sermon in welcoming the month of Ramaḍān:

"O people, indeed the month of Allah has approached you with blessings, mercy and forgiveness. In the eyes of Allah, it is the best of all months, its days are the best of all days, its nights are the best of all nights, and its hours are the best of all hours. It is a month in which you have been invited to be the honored guests of Allah. Your breathing in the month is tasbīḥ (reciting the praise of Allah), your sleep in it is an act of ʿibādah (worship), your deeds are accepted, and your prayers are answered. Therefore, ask your Lord with sincere intentions and pure hearts to help you fast during this month and recite His book, for the most unfortunate is one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month. By your thirst and hunger, remember the hunger of the Day of Judgment and its thirst. Give charity to the poor and needy among you, lower your glances from what is not permissible for you to see, and refrain [from hearing] what is not permissible for you to hear. Show sympathy to the orphans of the people, and sympathy will be shown to your orphans. O people, your souls are dependent on your deeds; therefore, release them [from the Hellfire] by asking for forgiveness. Your backs are burdened with your weight [of sins], so lighten their burden by lengthening your sujūd (prostrations), and He shall not threaten with fire when people will stand [in prayers] for the Lord of the universe.

> *Repent for your sins, and raise your hands in supplications at the time of your prayers, for that is the best of times in which Allah looks toward His servants with mercy. He grants them what they whisper to Him, responds to them when they call upon Him, gives to them when they ask Him, and accepts their prayers when they pray to Him.*

Daily Duʿā for Ramaḍān

By Imām at-Taqī (ʿa)

O people, whosoever among you improves his khūlq (character) during this month shall pass over the ṣirāṭ (the bridge) on the Day of Judgment when otherwise their feet would slip.

O people, the doors of Paradise are open during this month, so ask your Lord not to close them on you; the doors of Hell are closed, so ask your Lord not to open them up for you. The satans are in chains, so ask Allah not to impose them upon you."

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) stood up and said, *"O Messenger of Allah (ṣ), what is the best of deeds during this month?"*

The Prophet (ṣ) said, *"O Abū Ḥasan (ʿa)! The best of deeds during this month is to refrain from what Allah has prohibited."*

Then, the Prophet (ṣ) began to weep. Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) asked, *"O Messenger of Allah (ṣ), what has made you cry?"*

The Prophet (ṣ) said, *"O ʿAlī (ʿa), I am crying for the injustice that will be done against you this month. It is as if I see you while you are praying to your Lord, and the most wretched of the mankind...struck you [with his sword] on your head so that its blood colored your beard."*

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) asked, *"O Messenger of Allah (ṣ), will this happen while I am at peace with my faith?"*

The Prophet (ṣ) replied, *"You will be at peace with your faith. O ʿAlī (ʿa), whoever kills you, it is as if he has killed me; whoever hates you, it is as if he hates me; whoever curses you, it is as if he has cursed me because you are to me like my own soul. Your soul is from my soul, and your nature is from my nature. Verily, All-Mighty Allah created me and you, then He selected me and you, and chose me for Prophethood and chose you for Imāmah; so, whoever rejects your Imāmah has indeed rejected my Prophethood. O ʿAlī (ʿa), you are my heir, the father of my descendants, the husband of my daughter (ʿa), and the successor of my community in my life as well as in my death. Your command is my command, and your prohibition is my prohibition. I swear by the One who raised me as the Prophet (ṣ) and made me the best of creation, you indeed are the proof of Allah upon His creation, the trustee of His secret, and His vicegerent toward His servants."*

(Translated by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā, Vol. 2, P. 265)

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm

I begin, dedicate my action, and seek help with the name of Allah, the All-Kind (general mercy), the All-Merciful (mercy for the believers)

يَا ذَا الّذِي كَانَ قَبْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ،

Yā dhal-ladhī kāna qabla kulli shayʾ

O He Who has always been there before all things,

ثُمّ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ، يَا ذَا الّذِي لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ،

Thumma khalaqa kulla shayʾ, Yā dhal-ladhī laysa ka-mithlihi shayʾ

And He then stays while all things vanish, Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity

وَيَا ذَا الّذِي لَيْسَ فِي السّمَاوَاتِ العُلَى،

Wa yā dhal-ladhī laysa fis-samāwātil-ʿulā,

O He who is neither in the highest Heavens,

وَلا فِي الأَرَضِينَ السُّفْلَى،

Wa lā fil-araḍīnas-suflā,

Nor in the lowest layers of the earth,

وَلا فَوْقَهُنّ وَلا تَحْتَهُنّ وَلا بَيْنَهُنّ إلهٌ يُعْبَدُ غَيْرُهُ،

Wa lā fawqa-hunna wa lā taḥta-hunna wa lā bayna-hunna ilāhun yuʿbadu ghayruh,

Nor above them, nor beneath them, nor there is between them any god that is worshipped except Him.

لَكَ الحَمْدُ حَمْداً لا يَقْوَى عَلَى إحْصَائِهِ إلاّ أَنْتَ،

Lakal-ḥamdu ḥamdan la yaqwā ʿalā iḥṣāʾihi illa ant,

O' to You be the praise that none can count except You,

فَصَلّ عَلَى مُحَمّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمّدٍ صَلاةً لا يَقْوَى عَلَى إحْصَائِهَا إلاّ أَنْتَ.

Faṣalli ʿalā Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad; ṣalātan la yaqwā ʿalā iḥṣāʾihā illa ant.

So, please bless Muḥammad (ṣ) and the household of Muḥammad (ṣ) with the blessings that none can count except You.

Qur'ān Corner

سورة الْكوثر

Sūrah al-Kawthar

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm

I begin, dedicate my action, and seek help with the name of Allah, the All-Kind (general mercy), the All-Merciful (mercy for the believers),

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾

Innā aʿṭaynākal-kawthar

Indeed We have given you abundance,

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ﴿٢﴾

Faṣalli li-rabbika wan-ḥar

So pray to your Lord, and sacrifice [the sacrificial camel],

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾

Inna shāniʾaka huwal-abtar

Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity.

Continuing from page 3

the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) with the Miʿrāj because of his (ṣ) servitude. Hence, Allah said, "Immaculate is He who carried His servant on a journey by night..."[2] In this same vein, the Forerunners (as-Sābiqūn) mentioned in Sūrah Wāqiʿah, like the Prophets and angels, strive to be good servants of Allah.[3] Some commentaries describe them as people who surpass others in faith and turn toward Allah. For this reason, they are the nearest to Him when compared to the 'People of the Right and Left hand.'[4] They turn toward Allah in worship and supplications (duʿā). Although there is a lot of discussion around the authenticity of "Prayer is the miʿrāj of the believer," which has been falsely attributed as ḥadīth, it rightly describes a servant's level of devotion during worship. Duʿā (supplication), for such servants, is a means to communicate with Allah. Hence, both prayer and supplications are means to gain closeness to Allah. Obligatory prayers mandate a daily effort to gain closeness to Allah. Supplications, on the other hand, are not a compulsory part of daily worship. Nevertheless, the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) encourage using duʿā as a means of gaining closeness to Allah. For example, Imām as-Sajjād (ʿa), in the fifth duʿā of Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah, supplicates:

وَيَا مَنْ تَنْقَطِعُ رُؤْيَتِهِ الْأَبْصَارُ، صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّد وَآلِهِ، وَأَدْنِنَا إِلَى قُرْبِكَ

Wa yā man tanqaṭiʿu ruʾyatihil-abṣār; ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammad wa ālih; wa adninā ilā qurbik

O He upon whom eyes fall short of seeing, bless Muḥammad (ṣ) and his family (ʿa), and bring us close to You.

Likewise, in the 47th duʿā, he supplicates:

وَانْزَعْ مِنْ قَلْبِي حُبَّ دُنْيَا دَنِيَّةٍ تَنْهى عَمَّا عِنْدَكَ، وَتَصُدُّ عَنِ ابْتِغَآءِ الْوَسِيلَةِ إِلَيْكَ، وَتُذْهِلُ عَنِ التَّقَرُّبِ مِنْكَ

Wan-zaʿ min qalbī ḥubba dunyā daniyyatin tanhā ʿammā ʿindak; wa taṣuddu ʿanib-tighāʾil-wasīlati ilayk; wa tudhhilu ʿanit-taqarrubi mink

O Allah, remove from my heart the love of this mundane world, which keeps me from everything that is with You, and prevents me from seeking a means toward You, and distracts me from gaining closeness to You.

The objective of gaining nearness to Allah is evident in these supplications. Moreover, in the latter duʿā, the Imām (ʿa) outlines a strategy for achieving closeness. First, the servant must rid himself of love for the world and for all things that hinder him from turning toward Allah. After that, the servant's love must be refocused, as the Imām (ʿa) supplicates in the Prayer of the Lovers:

أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ، وَحُبَّ كُلِّ عَمَلٍ يُوصِلُنِي إِلىٰ قُرْبِكَ

Asʾaluka ḥubbaka wa ḥubba man yuḥibbuk; wa ḥubba kulli ʿamalin yūṣilunī ilā qurbik

I ask You for love of You and for love of those who love You, and for love of every action that makes me close to You.

In the second step for achieving nearness, Allah's servants must love Him, those who love Him, and every action that draws them close to Him. In many respects, this duʿā reflects the Prophet's (ṣ) dialogue with Allah in Miʿrāj when he asked for an action by which he could achieve closeness. In response, Allah said:

Make your nights into days, and make your days into nights.

Allah's response is not merely about staying awake all night and engaging in day-time activities at night. What He intended is that closeness is achieved through worship during the night, as He states in Sūrah al-Muzzammil, verses 2-3:

قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً (٢) نِّصْفَهُ أَوِ انقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلاً (٣)

Stand in vigil [prayer] through the night, all but a small part (of it)

Furthermore, the Prophet (ṣ) asked Allah for clarification during the Miʿrāj, to which Allah responded:

Make your sleep prayer and make your food hunger.

Perhaps the easiest way to transform one's night and day is to sleep while in ablution; for the Prophet (ṣ) said, "*Whosoever sleeps in a state of purity is considered to be fasting and praying.*"[5] But Allah's servants are challenged to go beyond this preliminary practice, to pray, read the Qurʾān, and remember their Lord at night—even if it is for part of the night. That is, a person can begin by reciting five minutes of Qurʾān before Fajr prayer, or by reciting duʿā, or engaging in any action that Allah loves. Once stamina is built up, a person can stay up longer and engage in more worship, yielding greater closeness to Allah. In Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17:79), He says:

وَمِنَ لَّيلِ فَتَهَجَّد بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَبعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحمُودًا

And keep vigil for a part of the night, as a supererogatory prayer for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station.

The above verse may explain why some believers adopt the popular saying "Prayer is the miʿrāj of the believer." Through the night prayer, a servant gains nearness to Allah and rises to a praiseworthy station, maqām maḥmūd. A station that is, without doubt, the station of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) since he is the addressee in the verse. In fact, one of the Prophet's (ṣ) titles is Maḥmūd because he rose to this station. So, the servants who walk in the footsteps of Muḥammad (ṣ) will be raised to a praiseworthy station. They will become neither Prophets nor Messengers, nor will they reach the level of servitude (ʿubudiyyah) of Muḥammad (ṣ). But, they will avoid walking in the footsteps of Shayṭān, as Allah says, *"Do not follow the footsteps of Satan."*[6] Moreover, by making our tahajjud (the night prayer), the servants of Allah will be transforming their nights into days and days into nights, as Allah advised His Messenger (ṣ) to do while on the Night Journey.

[1] Al-Kāfī, Vol. 8, P. 18.

[2] Noble Qurʾān, 17:1.

[3] Noble Qurʾān, 56:10.

[4] Noble Qurʾān, 56:8-11.

[5] Kanz al-ʿUmmāl, Vol. 9, P. 277, Ḥadīth #25999.

[6] Noble Qurʾān, 2:168 and 208; 6:142; 24:21

Duʿā For Forgiveness

It is narrated that the Noble Prophet (ṣ) said that the one who says the following supplication after each obligatory prayer in Ramaḍān will have all his sins forgiven up to the Resurrection Day:

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm

I begin, dedicate my action, and seek help with the name of Allah, the All-Kind (general mercy), the All-Merciful (mercy for the believers),

اللّٰهُمَّ أَدْخِلْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ السُّرُورَ،

Allāhumma adkhil ʿalā ahlil-qubūris-surūr,

O Allah, instill happiness in the spirits of the inhabitants of the grave,

اللّٰهُمَّ أَغْنِ كُلَّ فَقِيرٍ،

Allāhumma aghni kulla faqīr,

O Allah, enrich every indigent (poor one),

اللّٰهُمَّ أَشْبِعْ كُلَّ جَائِعٍ،

Allāhumma ashbiʿ kulla jā'iʿ,

O Allah, satisfy every hungry person,

اللّٰهُمَّ اكْسُ كُلَّ عُرْيَانٍ،

Allāhummak-su kulla ʿuryān,

O Allah, clothe every unclothed one,

اللّٰهُمَّ اقْضِ دَيْنَ كُلِّ مَدِينٍ،

Allāhummaq-ḍi dayna kulli madīn,

O Allah, facilitate the payment of every indebted one,

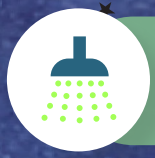
Duʿā continued

Night of Destiny

The nights of Qadr are forthcoming. In the Islamic tradition, they are nights of extreme importance in which Allah decides the affairs of the believer for the next year. One has the potential during these nights to alter their destiny, hence the name, 'Night of Destiny'. The special night could fall on the 19th, 21st, or 23rd, so one must strive to make the most of each night. There are common actions (ʿamāl) that one can do during these blessed nights to maximize one's benefit which are listed below.

Write the wishes you would like to ask from Allah on the night all wishes are answered. Include a prayer to hasten the return of our Awaited Savior, Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj).

Common ʿAmāl



GHUSL

STAY AWAKE
According to Shaykh Ṭūsī, gaining knowledge is one of the most recommended acts.

ṢADAQAH

MUSTAḤAB TWO RAKʿAT ṢALĀH
In each rakʿah Sūrah al-Fātiḥah then Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ seven times.

ASK FORGIVENESS
"Astaghfirullāha Rabbī wa atūbu ilayh "
a hundred times and Duʿā Kumayl

QUR'ĀN
Recite the verses of the Noble Qur'ān

ZIYĀRAH IMĀM ḤUSAYN (ʿA)

PRAY FOR OTHERS

SELF REFLECTION

100 RAK'AT ṢALĀT
Many people read their outstanding prayers and include them in the 100 rakʿat ṣalāt read in two rakʿat, getting reward for both actions.

Duʿā continued

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَرِّجْ عَنْ كُلِّ مَكْرُوبٍ،
Allāhumma farrij ʿan kulli makrūb,
O Allah, relieve every deeply anguished one,

اَللّٰهُمَّ رُدَّ كُلَّ غَرِيبٍ،
Allāhumma rudda kulla gharīb,
O Allah, return every wanderer (home),

اَللّٰهُمَّ فُكَّ كُلَّ أَسِيرٍ،
Allāhumma fukka kulla asīr,
O Allah, free every captive,

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَصْلِحْ كُلَّ فَاسِدٍ مِنْ أُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ،
Allāhumma aṣliḥ kulla fāsidin min umūril-muslimīn,
O Allah, reform every corrupt affair of the Muslims,

اَللّٰهُمَّ اشْفِ كُلَّ مَرِيضٍ،
Allāhummash-fi kulla marīḍ,
O Allah, cure every sick person,

اَللّٰهُمَّ سُدَّ فَقْرَنَا بِغِنَاكَ،
Allāhumma sudda faqranā bi-ghināk,
O Allah, fill our poverty with your needlessness,

اَللّٰهُمَّ غَيِّرْ سُوءَ حَالِنَا بِحُسْنِ حَالِكَ،
Allāhumma ghayyir sūʾa ḥālinā bi-ḥusni ḥālik,
O Allah, change our unpleasant state into your beautiful state,

اَللّٰهُمَّ اقْضِ عَنَّا الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنَا مِنَ الْفَقْرِ،
Allāhummaq-ḍi ʿannad-dayna wa aghninā minal-faqr,
O Allah, facilitate the payment of our debt and make us needless,

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.
Innaka ʿalā kulli shayʾin qadīr.
Surely, You are All-Powerful over everything.

As the pond of Ghadīr resonated

With the Prophet's (ṣ) declaration

The angels in joy and merriment

Departed from their exalted stations

Today Islam was perfected

The Lord's token on the Muḥammadan (ṣ) nation

To all the believers from among jinn and men

Accept Ibn Ammar's heartfelt congratulations

As today is by all accounts

The most joyous of occasions

For it is by Divine decree

The son of Abū Ṭālib's coronation

Indeed the Prophet (ṣ) is succeeded today

By the Qurʾān's physical manifestation

By Ibn Ammār

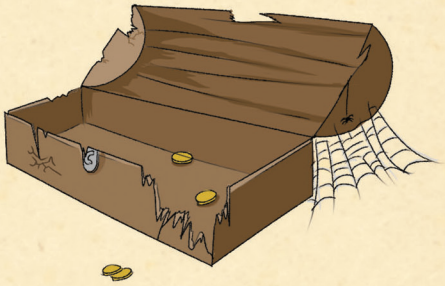
KNOWLEDGE VS. WEALTH

KNOWLEDGE IS BETTER THAN WEALTH BECAUSE

KNOWLEDGE PROTECTS YOU,

WHILE YOU HAVE TO GUARD WEALTH

WEALTH DECREASES IF YOU KEEP ON SPENDING IT



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Arabic terms in this booklet have been transliterated according to the following guidelines:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)	ظ	ẓ
ء	ʾ (medial or final form)	ع	ʿ
ا	a	غ	gh
ب	b	ف	f
ت	t	ق	q
ث	th	ك	k
ج	j	ل	l
ح	ḥ	م	m
خ	j	ن	n
د	d	ه	h
ذ	dh	و	w
ر	r	ي	y
ز	z	ة	h (without iḍāfah)
س	s	ة	t (with iḍāfah)
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ	ـَـ	a
ض	ḍ	ـِـ	i
ط	ṭ	ـُـ	u

Arabic Glossary

Alḥamdulillāh:
All praise is for Allah

Allah:
The Arabic term for God, a culmination of all His holy names

Allāhu Akbar:
God (Allah) is Greater than anything you can imagine

Salāmun ʿalaykum:
Peace be upon you

Ṣalawāt:
Sending blessings on the Prophet (ṣ) and his Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa)

Next Issue

The Guardianship of Allah

Imām ʿAlī's (ʿa) Success

Byzantines in Battle

"So compete with one another in doing good."
Noble Qurʾān, 2:148
2ND CHANCE